



A STUDY OF THE SOCIAL ACCEPTANCE OF SYRIAN REFUGEE CHILDREN IN TURKEY

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Abstract

Turkey currently hosts 3.7 million Syrian refugees, and it becomes likely that the Syrians in Turkey will become permanent. The Turkish government recognizes both the importance of teaching Turkish children to respect ethnic and cultural differences and increasing social acceptance of the Syrians in Turkish society. As such, the Turkish government has begun broadcasting Syrian-related information via the state channel TRT Çocuk. This study analyzed the ‘Put Yourself in His Shoes’ episode of a popular cartoon featured on TRT Çocuk called Rafadan Tayfa. Scollon’s Mediated Discourse Analysis method and Social Learning Theory were applied as to examine the messages in the cartoon. It is revealed in this study that the cartoon here includes messages that encourage Turkish children to better understand the challenging experience the refugees have faced, and suggests to viewers that the Syrians are not burden to Turkey, but they contribute to their host societies with their talents.

Keywords: *Syrian Refugees, Social Acceptance, Mediated Discourse Analysis, Social Learning Theory*



TÜRKİYE'DEKİ SURİYELİ MÜLTECİ ÇOCUKLARIN TOPLUMSAL KABULÜNE İLİŞKİN BİR ARAŞTIRMA

Öz

Türkiye günümüzde 3.7 milyon Suriyeli mülteciye ev sahipliği yapmakta ve Suriyelilerin Türkiye'de kalıcı olma olasılığı her geçen gün artmaktadır. Türk hükümeti hem Türk çocuklarının etnik ve kültürel farklılıklara olan duyarlılığını arttırmaya hem de Türk toplumunda Suriyeli mültecilere yönelik toplumsal kabulün artırılmasına önem vermektedir. Bu kapsamda, Türk hükümeti devlet kanalı olan TRT Çocuk vasıtasıyla içeriğinde Suriyeli mültecilere ilişkin bilgilerin paylaşıldığı yayınlar yapmaya başlamıştır. Bu çalışma, TRT Çocuk kanalının en popüler çizgi filmlerinden biri olan ve Suriyeli mültecilere ilişkin zengin öğelerin paylaşıldığı Rafadan Tayfa çizgi filminin Kendini Onun Yerine Koy bölümünde Türk çocuklara verilen mesajları, Scollon'un Aracılı Söylem Analizi metodu ve Sosyal Öğrenme Kuramı çerçevesinde analiz etmiştir. Çalışmanın bulgularına göre, Rafadan Tayfa'nın bu bölümünde Türk çocuklarına zorunlu göçün mülteciler üzerinde ne gibi olumsuz etkilerinin olduğu sunulmuş, etnik ve kültürel farklılıkların bir sorun gibi algılanmaması gerektiğinin, hatta yabancıların yetenek ve becerileriyle ev sahibi toplumlara olumlu katkılarının da olabildiğinin altı çizilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Suriyeli Mülteciler, Toplumsal Kabul, Aracılı Söylem Analizi, Sosyal Öğrenme Kuramı

1. INTRODUCTION

Conceptually, migration is the translocation of individuals from one settlement to another, which can occur either through involuntary action or via the individual's own free will. Individuals may migrate in hopes of finding improved living opportunities, or they may move as a result of ethnic or political conflicts, civil wars, discrimination, or natural disasters. Regardless of their geographic origins or why they occur, migration movements are often of great concern to politicians, social scientists and the public at large (Deaux and Wiley, 2007). However, migration could transform the host states into multicultural, multiethnic, multireligious, and multilinguistic social structures (Taran, 2001).

According to the United Nations Higher Commissioner for Refugees (2021a), since March 2011, the civil war in Syria has caused 5.6 million Syrian citizens to become refugees*, and Turkey alone has played host to 3.7 million of these refugees (United Nations Higher Commissioner for Refugees, 2021b). The civil war in Syria has entered its tenth year. Since the duration of the refugees' stay in Turkey has been longer than was initially anticipated, they have begun to profoundly affect the Turkish way of life and social order (Aksu Kargin, 2018; Erdoğan, 2015; Ferris and Kirişçi, 2016; Kirişçi and Ferris, 2015; Orhan and Senyücel Gündoğar, 2015).

Because the war in Syria seems to be without end at this point, Syrian refugees' prospect of becoming permanent residents in Turkey is gradually increasing. As such, it has become necessary for the Turkish government to take steps aimed at preventing the otherizing of and hate crimes against the Syrian refugees in Turkey. One such step involves informing Turkish audiences by portraying the experiences of refugees in a foreign country in television programs. *TRT Çocuk*, which is the Radio and Television Supreme Council's only children's channel, has begun making programs that depict refugees in a way that might encourage Turkish citizens to see them in a positive light. One of them is a program called *Haberin Olsun (You should be Informed)*, which is broadcast in the evening, features news aimed at children; this program showed a short documentary that introduced a refugee family to the viewer.

* Although via both a domestic legislative and international agreements, such as the 1951 Geneva Convention and 1967 Protocol, stated that it will recognize refugee status only to those individuals who come from Europe, it granted temporary protection to the Syrian refugees who seek asylum in Turkey. However, within the scope of this study, the Syrian citizens in Turkey will be assessed as refugees, as defined via UNHCR records. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (2021, October 7). "Operational Portal," Syria Regional Refugee Response: Turkey, available at <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria/location/113> (accessed 11 October 2021).

Another program, a popular cartoon on TRT Çocuk, is called *Elif ve Arkadaşları* (Elif and Her Friends), and this show features an episode called *Yeni Arkadaş (New Friend)*,** which shows a Syrian child attending a new class in Turkey. In this episode, the Syrian child is depicted as having been successfully educated at a gymnastics school in Syria, and her gymnastics ability enables her to help her Turkish friends in their gymnastics class. In turn, the Turkish children share their toys with the Syrian student, and they play games with her and help her to learn Turkish. This episode seems to emphasize the fact that even if Syrian children may not speak Turkish well, they have other talents that might be welcomed by their Turkish peers.

Rafadan Tayfa, one of the most popular cartoons on TRT Çocuk, features an episode called *Kendini Onun Yerine Koy (Put Yourself in His Shoes)****, which depicts the problems a refugee child experiences in daily life when trying to communicate with Turkish children. In this episode, a Turkish child tries to exclude a refugee boy from the Turkish child's peer group, and the Turkish boy's friends teach him a lesson that suggests that he should be understanding of the refugee boy's situation.

Although there is only a handful of episodes of cartoons or documentaries addressing the experiences of refugees in Turkey, by creating and airing these sorts of programs, TRT Çocuk, and thus the government, are trying to prevent or mitigate the discontent, prejudice, and stereotyping that might originate in young Turkish children against refugee children. For this reason, it seems prudent to examine these media works and the messages they seek to impart as means of increasing Turkish children's social acceptance of Syrian refugees.

**For the full episode, please see the following link:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A29JhdXdkmY>.

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=roVELfRmCYg>

Due to the limited space given to this article, among the above-mentioned three episodes, the “Put Yourself into His Shoes” episode of *Rafadan Tayfa* is here analyzed using the Mediated Discourse Analysis method. This episode was selected for analysis since *Rafadan Tayfa* is more popular among Turkish children compared to the other two programs. Further, this episode is longer than the other two episodes, and more importantly includes more messages for Turkish children about the problems that Syrian refugees experience in Turkey. The article analyzes the types of messages the program’s creators seek to share with viewers. As such, this paper examines the following research question: What messages does *Rafadan Tayfa*’s “Put Yourself into His Shoes” episode present to Turkish children with regard to their communication and social interactions with refugee children, and the respect they should have for the refugee children’s ethnicity?

1.1. The Significance of Mass Media and Social Learning Theory

Mass media has served as a crucial tool in mass communication, as it both takes the pulse of public opinion and shapes public opinion. Mass media, in addition to entertaining individuals enabling them to easily become informed of both local and global issues, serves to shape people’s attitudes regarding an array of topics. When one takes into account the effective role the mass media plays in shaping people’s perceptions and opinions, it becomes evident that the ways in which refugees are presented in the media will suggest to individuals how they should think of or feel about the refugees (Kosho, 2016; Wright, 2002). As such, media outlets’ representations of the refugees are important and cannot be ignored or overlooked, and several studies have focused on the coverage of the Syrian refugee crisis in media (Bozdağ and Smets, 2017; De-Andres et al., 2016; Göktuna Yaylacı and Yetkin, 2015). When media platforms associate refugees with negative elements, for example, they increase the risk of stirring feelings of

prejudice among citizens in the host country, and over time, this can lead to extreme discrimination and even hate crimes (Boztepe, 2017). Therefore, it is important that the media develops and presents program content that prompts audiences to embrace diversity. This content should be presented not only to adults but to children as well. Children will grow into the adults who will shape future perceptions regarding migrant groups.

According to Albert Bandura's social learning theory, individuals acquire new behaviors either through their own experiences or by observing the behaviours of others (1971), which are referred to as role models. A child can learn a new behaviour after observing a number of role models, which might include a family member, a friend, a teacher at school, or a character from a television show (McLeod, 2016). According to social learning theory, children first observe characters on television who engage in certain behaviours, and then they code these behaviors in their minds. Children then begin to imitate and internalize the observed behaviors (McLeod, 2016). Popular characters on television today, whom children admire, serve to both shape children's perceptions and help children to develop social relations with other children (Marsh et al., 2005). According to a study that examined the impacts of television on children's learning, children had become more sensitive to the feelings and needs of others, and had become more respectful with regard to other cultures and beliefs, after they had watched television programs that encouraged these behaviors and attitudes (Marsh et al., 2005). Another study suggested that children who had observed empathetic role models in cartoons became less self-centered and developed empathy for others (Oruç et al., 2011). When one considers the amount of time children spend watching cartoons, it becomes apparent how important it is that these cartoons share positive messages regarding others, including foreigners and refugees whose ethnicities and cultures are different from those of the host country's children.

2. METHODOLOGY

Rafadan Tayfa, which first aired in 2015 on the state channel TRT Çocuk, and which has broken ratings records (Açık, 2017), is a cartoon that shares the adventures of characters including Akın, Hayri, Kamil, Mert, Sevim, Hale, Brother Rüstem, and Uncle Basri. These characters live in a neighborhood in Istanbul in the 1990s, and the cartoon offers viewers important messages regarding friendship, and neighborhood or community life. Each episode of the cartoon depicts separate event that originate from and have an impact on the lives of the show's primary characters, Akın, Hayri, Kamil, and Mert. Each episode is periodically re-broadcast on the state channel. The current study analyzed the "Kendini Onun Yerine Koy" ("Put Yourself in His Shoes") episode, using both the framework of social learning theory and the mediated discourse analysis method.

Ron Scollon's (2001) mediated discourse analysis method is used primarily among linguists and educational researchers. This method allows for analysis of both the speech and the actions occur among people. This method permits one to address questions such as "What is going on there?," "What is someone doing there, and why?," and "What motivations are behind the action?" (Scollon and De Saint-Georges, 2014: 66).

Although mediated discourse analysis (MDA) is similar to discourse analysis, the former examines not only how the meaning of the discourse is formed and what the discourse transmits, but it also focuses on all the actions that take place simultaneous to the discourse (Norris and Jones, 2005). It also places emphasis on the multimodal messages shared via visual effects, gestures, background music, intonations, body stances, and physical movements (Wohlwend, 2009a). According to MDA, examining discourse alone does not allow for sufficient explanation of the meaning of the action that is taking place,

since the messages being presented are not always hidden exclusively in the verbal discourse. As such, it is important to analyze the actions occurring around the verbal discourse as well. In sum, while discourse analysis focuses on *discourse as action*, mediated discourse analysis adopts the insight of *discourse in action* (Norris and Jones, 2005: 8). In this study, data was filtered using Wohlwend's (2009b) filtering model, which the author adopted from Scollon. The transactional events that resulted in or from social learning experience are revealed, and the transactional events that resulted in behavioural changes are micro-analyzed (see Figure 1).



Figure 1. Mediated Discourse Analysis Filters (adopted from Wohlwend, 2009).

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In applying MDA, Wohlwend (2009a; 2009b) used four filters to analyze extant data. Wohlwend formed the first of these filters by adopting from Scollon's *locating participants and mediational means* filter, which is used to determine the active participants, each of whom play active roles in a given video, as well as the mediational means, which play an active role in the video under study (Wohlwend, 2009b). The second filter is the *scene observation to identify key practices* filter; via this filter, the scenes in the video are watched carefully, and the important practices are coded (Wohlwend, 2009b). The third filter is the *locating the nexus of practices* filter, which permits one to identify the points at which important practices take place in abundance, feed one another, and are

fed from one another. In other words, this filter allows for the identification of the nexus of practices (Wohlwend, 2009b). The final filter, the *locating transformative events* filter, enables the researcher to identify transformative events (i.e., the nexus of practices that allow for meaning or behaviour to transform and for social learning to take place) (Wohlwend, 2009b). Once these four filters are applied, the researcher can then complete the analysis by micro-analyzing the identified transformative events.

2.1. Mediated Discourse Analysis: *Rafadan Tayfa*, “Kendini Onun Yerine Koy”

First filter: Finding participants and mediational means

In this study, the “Kendini Onun Yerine Koy” episode of *Rafadan Tayfa* was analyzed using MDA filters, which allowed for transformative events to be identified and micro-analyzed. The first filter or stage was used to determine the participants and mediational means of the work under study. The cartoon characters who have messages to share and who play active roles throughout the episode were identified as active participants. These characters include Kamil, Hayri, Akin, Mert, and Tahir. In addition, *social interaction*, *communication*, and *respect for ethnic diversity* were identified as the mediational means which mediated the formation of the discourse examined in this study.

Second filter: Observing scenes to locate key practices

When the second filter was applied, the cartoon was watched several times from the beginning to the end, and three important scenes were identified (see Tables 1 [click here](#) and 2 [click here](#)). These scenes included *coming together on the playground as a group*, *Hayri imaging himself in the refugee boy’s (Tahir) shoes*, *Hayri feeling regret and thus including Tahir in the group*. By watching

these scenes over and over, the researcher was able to identify key practices related to social interaction, communication, and respect for ethnic diversity. For example, the key practices that were including Tahir in the peer group, excluding Tahir from the group via nationalist discourse, and playing games that were related to social interaction. Additionally, key practices such as body language, speaking Turkish backwards, and reversing the texts were identified to be related to communication. Finally, key practices including emphasis on similarities, respect for ethnic differences, and foreigners' contributions to the host country were related to respect for ethnic diversity (See Appendix for the full list of key practices).

Third filter: Placing the nexus of practice (NoP)

When the third filter is applied, the nexus of practices is identified where the key practices take place simultaneously, feed one another, and are fed by one another. In this study, the researcher analyzed the scenes where the key practices relating to social interaction, communication, and respect for ethnic diversity occurred at the same time, fed one another, and were fed by one another. This allowed for the nexus of practice to be identified. Per the current analysis, no key practices took place within the first two scenes; however, the third scene was dense with key practices and nexus of practices relating to all three mediational means which were communication, social interaction and respect for ethnic diversity.

Fourth filter: Determining transformative events

In the final filter, the nexus of practices is the focus, and the transformative event, which leads to actual learning and a change in action among the primary characters, is identified. In the current context, the transformative event took place when Hayri experienced regret, learned the lesson his friends shared with

him, and included Tahir in the group. In the next section, moment-by-moment micro-analysis is applied to this transformative event. However, before the transformative event is discussed, the first two scenes, which included neither nexus of practices nor a transformative event, are discussed so as to provide background information about what was going on in the episode under study.

3. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. The first scene of “Put Yourself into His Shoes”: Coming together as a group on the playground

It is a sunny day, and Hayri, Mert, Kamil, and Akin have come together in the neighborhood where they always meet up. While Hayri tries to explain to his group of friends (i.e., Mert, Kamil, and Akin) that they are meeting up for a different reason today, the friends’ attention is on a boy who is sitting alone on the steps at the entrance of the counter-apartment. The following conversation takes place among Hayri, Mert, Kamil, and Akin.

Kamil: Who is the boy?

Mert: I don’t know.

Akin: He does not look like he is from here.

Hayri: Ohh, dear! I don’t care who he is; we have a business. You, look at me!

Mert: Ohh, let’s ask!

Mert: [Mert waves his hand to the boy by smiling.] Hi! Are you okay?

[The refugee boy looks at them with a sad expression and waves his hand as he smiles shyly.]

Kamil: I guess he does not know our language?

Hayri: Yes, that is what I mean. We are not in a Turkish course. We are on the playground. [The refugee boy smiles, and just as he takes a step to approach the Turkish boys, Hayri, raises both hands and waves them up and down, motioning for the refugee boy to sit.] No, no, sit! [Hayri raises both hands again and, again, motions the boy to sit, but this time, he speaks with emphasis.] Siiittt! [The refugee boy, sad, sits back down on the stairs of his apartment. Hayri seems pleased with the situation.]

In the first scene of the cartoon, the producer seeks to show that the refugee child feels lonely in a foreign country and experiencing difficulty in making friends. And while some Turkish take into consideration the difficulty refugee children have in communicating in a foreign country where they do not know the language, and thus approach these children in a friendly manner, other Turkish children (those whom Hayri represents) mean to be insensitive regarding the issues the refugee children face and do not warmly welcome them into their respective peer groups. Some academic studies that have been conducted regarding Syrian refugees in Turkey have supported the actions depicted in this scene. They have found that some Turkish children are exclusionary towards Syrian children (Aksu Kargin, 2016).

As the scene continues, Mert, Akin, and Kamil let Hayri know that they believe his behaviour regarding the boy is wrong, but Hayri remains reluctant. He explains to his friends why they are meeting on the playground.

Hayri: Why did we meet here?

Kamil: Why did we meet?

Hayri: We met because we will represent our country. Do you now understand why that boy cannot participate with us? We will represent Turkey, and he is foreign!

Akın: Okay, but brother, in order for one of us to represent Turkey, we must first go to Turkish elections.

Hayri: Here is why we will work and train hard.

This scene depicts some Turkish children's attitudes of excluding and otherizing refugee children. This attitude is portrayed in Hayri's character and his ideas pertaining to nationalist discourse. According to nationalism, sharing a mutual language, lifestyle, and cultural traditions and values is considered a means of binding people together to form an 'us' identity. People whose ethnic backgrounds, lifestyles, and cultural traditions and values are different are considered *other*. A child who is surrounded by his or her family, society and nation, ethnicity, religious consciousness, and cultural values, is capable of equating him or herself with these cultural means, and he or she may eventually develop ethnic consciousness (Allport, 1954). In addition, an individual is also able to characterize other individuals as *foreigners* who behave differently and who possess different cultural traditions and values (Allport, 1954). It is apparent that both children and adults who are citizens of the host communities might easily perceive and categorize immigrants, asylum-seekers, and refugee groups as *others*, because of different ethnic identities and sociocultural values than individuals from the host country.

In addition, the fact that migrant groups possess different cultural traditions and values often prompts the natives to perceive the foreigners as a symbolic threat to the natives' own values and lifestyle, resulting sometimes into prejudiced attitudes toward the foreigners (Stephan and Stephan, 2000). In many ways, this perceived threat has defined the way Turkish citizens view the

Syrian refugees in Turkey. A number of Turkish citizens believe that the Syrian refugees possess cultural values that differ from their own, and they pose a considerable social problem (Man, 2016). This can serve to perpetuate problems between native and foreign populations occupying the same space, as the in-group (i.e., the native population) may fear that the out-group (i.e., the foreign population) is infringing on the in-group's society, culture, and way of life in general (Ibrahim, 2005). In Turkey, for example, the in-group believes that the immigrants' cultural lifestyle has begun to invade Turkish citizens' way of life, which has led the in-group to exclude the out-group, just as Hayri, the character in the cartoon, excludes the refugee boy.

As the cartoon continues, Hayri is seen skipping a ball and he loses his balance in the process. He stumbles over the refugee boy and falls down. Hayri signals to the boy to sit somewhere else. The boy does not understand what Hayri is saying, which makes Hayri furious and he walks over to the boy and tells him in a stern voice to sit somewhere else. The refugee boy looks at the other Turkish boys (i.e., Akın, Mert, and Kamil) and, sadly, leaves the playground. Then a conversation materializes among the members of the group:

Hayri: Where is he going right now? Aaa! Did he get angry or what?

Mert: Eee! He could not understand you, Hayri.

Hayri: He could not understand what? I just told him to sit there.

Kamil: Okay, but you said it in such a way that it sounded like you were trying to push him out of the playground.

Hayri: Come on, my dear. I only told him to move a little farther away.

Mert: Here! But it was not understood as such.

Hayri: What can I do, my friend? He does not know our language.

Is this my fault?

Akın: Not knowing our language is his fault?

Hayri: If I go to a foreign country, I would learn at least a couple of words that would help me to make myself understood.

Kamil: Maybe he does not have time.

Akın: Yes. We don't know his story. Who is he, what is he doing here, when did he come? Imagine that you are in a completely different country and are among people who speak a language that you don't know. Put yourself in his shoes, brother Hayri.

Hayri: All right. Then, let me put myself into his shoes.

The above scene implies that the Syrian refugee children had no choice but to migrate and did not therefore have an opportunity to learn the language before they arrived in Turkey. In addition, emphasis is placed on the communication problems that exist between refugee children and Turkish children. It can be inferred from Hayri's behavior that otherizing the out-group is likely to worsen communication problems between the Turkish in-group and the refugee out-group, and this tense relationship could in turn alienate the refugees from the members of the host community.

A good number of Syrian refugee children in Turkey tend to experience problems adapting to their new environment. Since the refugee children are not familiar with Turkish culture, language, or lifestyle, they experience problems making friends (İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Çocuk Çalışmaları Birimi, 2015), and, sometimes, some Turkish children bully them (Aksu Kargın, 2016).

3.2. The second scene: Imaging yourself by putting yourself in his shoes

In the following scene of the cartoon, upon the suggestion of his friends, Hayri tries to put himself in the shoes of the refugee boy. In Hayri's daydream, he initially buys an ice cream using gestures to communicate. Later, at his friends' suggestion, he imagines himself on a bus where no one pays any attention to him, and he then imagines himself on a road where he is lost, asking people to help him locate an address, but no one looks him in the face or responds to his requests for assistance. Next, Kamil wants Hayri to imagine himself trying to buy something from a store whose owner kicks Hayri out of the store without even understanding what Hayri wants. The following conversation takes place among the group.

Hayri: Come on; don't exaggerate.

Mert: How do you know?

Kamil: It would be as if you went to a country in which you don't know the language.

Hayri: Nobody behaves like this or treats anyone this way.

Mert: If they are prejudiced, they do.

Hayri: I think you are exaggerating.

In this scene, by making Mert say, "If they are prejudiced, they [behave in this way]," the producer intends to draw attention to the fact that some Turkish children, represented by Hayri, are prejudiced toward the refugee children. Some Turkish children do not have empathy for refugee children and they fail to understand hardships the refugees face in a foreign country.

As stated previously, the host country citizens' negative feelings and prejudiced attitudes toward foreigners emanate from a perceived threat that the migrants will damage the state economy and the cultural fabric of the host society (Stephan et al., 2005). Turkish children's ideas and behaviours regarding the

Syrian refugee children are largely the results of their families' negative perceptions and attitudes toward the refugees (Aksu Kargin, 2016; Mercan Uzun and Bütün, 2016). As such, it is worthwhile to conduct studies regarding the ways media presents the refugee children and their experiences, and how these presentations affect the host country children's negative perceptions of the refugees.

3.3. Microanalysis of the transformative event: As Hayri learns his lesson, he feels regret and chooses to include Tahir in the group

In analyzing the key practices that occur in the cartoon episode under study (i.e., social interaction, communication, and respect for ethnic diversity), the researcher was able to identify one transformative event that happened as a result of learning and behavioural change. Hayri's ability to understand the lesson his friends shared through their own planned behaviours led to his learning, which in turn led to a change in his behavior. This is analyzed in detail in Tables 1 ([click here](#)) and 2 ([click here](#)).

In the first part of this transformative event, Hayri's friends are upset with him due to his treatment of the refugee boy, and in order to teach Hayri a lesson, the boys start speaking Turkish backwards. To this end, Hayri's friends re-organize all of the visible writing throughout the neighborhood so that each character is a mirror image of itself (i.e., backwards). The plan to teach Hayri a lesson is executed as soon as Hayri approaches Kamil, who is tasked with tending his family's store (see Table 1, [click here](#)).

In this part of the cartoon, the producer depicts the kinds of hardships the refugee children experience, as it is expected that this might encourage more Turkish children, such as Hayri, to better understand what life is like for the refugee children and to have empathy for them. This transformative event is microanalyzed, and the relationship between the refugee boy and the host

country children (in this case, Hayri) is evaluated in terms of social interaction, communication, and respect for ethnic diversity. Since this study has adopted mediated discourse analysis, social interaction, communication, and respect for ethnic diversity are analyzed not only in terms of the verbal dialogue between the characters, but also in terms of the other modes of expression in the meaning-making process (e.g., characters' postures and gestures, the intonations in characters' voices, the music used in the episode, and the coloring and effects of the scenes).

At the beginning of the transformative event (see Table 1 [click here](#), Time 6:13-7:11), as a part of the plan intended to teach Hayri a lesson, Kamil speaks backwards with Hayri as the latter boy attempts to offer his friend some baklava. Hayri is confused because he is unable to understand what Kamil is saying, Kamil does not pay attention to Hayri. He continues speaking backwards and he gestures to Hayri to leave the store. In this part of the cartoon, Hayri is unable to communicate with Kamil because of Kamil's speaking Turkish backwards and because the writing throughout the neighborhood has been changed to characters that are mirror images of what they should be. In an attempt to communicate with Kamil, Hayri shouts and makes gestures, but these attempts are in vain because Kamil pretends that he does not understand Hayri. The emphasis here is placed on the hardships a person might experience when he or she does not speak a language but attempts to communicate or engage socially with members of an unfamiliar society. Kamil represents the host country society in this scene, and Hayri represents the refugee boy he mistreated earlier in the episode. Eventually, Kamil kicks Hayri out of the store because he is unable to communicate.

As the episode continues (see Table 1 [click here](#), Time 7:22-7:53), Hayri is seen walking alone in the street when he sees Mert riding his bike. Hayri wants to

explain to Mert what he just experienced, but he is unable because Mert ignores Hayri despite having looked right at him. Hayri tries to stop Mert, and he begins shouting at him and attempts to communicate with Mert via his body language. Mert finally responds to Hayri, but he does so by speaking Turkish backwards, as he does not care whether Hayri understands him or not. Here, emphasis is placed on the fact that some Turkish children believe that they cannot engage socially with foreign children because of the language barrier, so they often ignore the foreign children or look away. When they do stop and talk to them, the Turkish children may not be inclined to care whether the refugee children understand them or not.

In the next section of the episode (see Table 1 [click here](#), Time 8:03-9:03), Hayri's attempts to communicate with his friends remain fruitless, and this indifference makes him feel frightened, upset, and lonely as if he were in a foreign country, unable to communicate with anyone or to socially integrate. Through Hayri, viewers are able to see that even Turkish children are unable to communicate with people in a foreign country if they do not know the language spoken in that country. In addition, it is clear here that a lack of language skills can make foreign children feel lonely.

This study identified and assessed practices referred to as means of mediation, which are considered important due to their abilities to mediate the actualization of learning. These practices include social interaction, communication, and respect for ethnic diversity. These are the practices that affect one another and that are affected by one another. For instance, up to this point in the episode, Hayri, the character who serves to represent some Turkish children, has had no respect for the fact that the refugee boy does not know the language and is ethnically different. This reluctance results in a complete lack of communication between Hayri and the refugee boy. Because the

children are not communicating with one another, they are also not engaging in social interaction.

In the next part of the cartoon, Hayri learns a lesson, thanks to his friends, and realizes a change in his behaviour. According to mediated discourse theory, the emergence of a change in behaviour after an event shows that learning has been actualized. This moment is the part of the cartoon where the producer aims to teach viewers a lesson to viewers that will help to shape the behavior of the audience.

After Hayri's friends ignore him and treat him poorly, the boy feels very lonely and afraid, and as he walks by an apartment building, he sees a poster on the building that reads, "yok enirey nuno inidnek" ("put yourself in his shoes"). A desperate Hayri sits down on the steps at the entrance of the apartment and begins to shake. At that moment, the black and white scene effect, which symbolizes Hayri's dreaming, returns to normal. Hayri walks in front of another apartment building, and he sees the refugee boy whom he had earlier told to move away from him. The distressed refugee boy is sitting alone, playing his flute. Hayri attempts to talk to the boy, so he walks closer to him, but the boy is very angry with Hayri. He ignores him and plays his flute even louder and more furiously. Hayri says to the boy:

Hayri: Okay, okay. You are right to be angry, but I understand you better now, my brother. You are a foreigner here and should be held in the highest regard. I had to come to understand your situation, as I was incapable of understanding it before. Who knows what you suffered from, Oh! I could not understand. I did not listen, I did not listen. God knows you tried to tell me, but I did not try to understand. Oh! You came from a different fatherland, and I was really, very unfair to you.

In this part of the cartoon (see Tablo 2, Time 9:44-11:00), Hayri, who had experienced the loneliness of being in a foreign country, begins to better understand the refugee boy, and seeks to forge a friendship with the Syrian boy. Thanks to the lesson his friends shared with him, Hayri has come to understand how not knowing the language of a place can make a person feel lonely, so he decides to become friends with the refugee boy. Hayri sits next to the boy, and he expresses his regret over how poorly he treated him. However, this time, the refugee boy is not receptive to Hayri's approach, and he disregards Hayri. Hayri continues to try to communicate with him, however; he speaks loudly and uses his body language in order to express himself to the boy. In addition, to show the regret he feels, Hayri begins to wail. Here, it is evident that Hayri understands the hardships that the refugee boy experiences and feels bad for behaving as he did before.

In the next section of the episode (see Table 2 [click here](#), Time 11:00-12:15), Hayri attempts to bridge the gap between the refugee boy and himself so that the two might become friends. To do this, Hayri offers the refugee boy baklava. Hayri and the refugee boy (Tahir) then begin to chat. In this part of the cartoon, it is clear that Hayri has learned his lesson and has acknowledged that his treatment of Tahir was wrong. Hayri demonstrates that he now respects that fact that Tahir does not know the language. Hayri even attempts to teach Tahir Turkish. The episode also shows viewers that there are similarities between the Turkish citizens and the Syrian refugees, because Hayri tells Tahir that the refugee boy and Hayri's uncle have the same name. According to Allport's intergroup contact theory, when an in-group learns more information about members of a minority group, the in-group is less likely to maintain feelings of prejudice regarding the minority group (Allport, 1954). Through intergroup contact, feelings of anxiety or apprehension are lessened when the in-group learns that it shares similarities with the out-group (Pettigrew and Tropp, 2008).

In addition, presenting accurate information to the in-group about the out-group can be an effective means of dispelling stereotypes the in-group may believe about the out-group (Stephen et al., 2005).

In this part of the episode, Hayri puts in considerable effort to communicate with Tahir and to teach him Turkish language. Hayri not only tries to help Tahir pronounce words by pronouncing them loudly himself, but he also tries to describe the meanings of the words using his body language. In doing this, Hayri approaches Tahir warmly and sincerely, as he strives to maintain communication between the boy and himself. Here, the episode producer seems to want to present viewers with an example of how Turkish children should behave when engaging with the refugee children.

As the transformative event continues (see Table 2 [click here](#), Time 12:20-13:04), viewers can see Tahir and Hayri playing football and chatting on the neighborhood playground. Hayri continues to teach Turkish to Tahir. Hayri and Tahir have become friends, and Hayri plays with Tahir on the same playground where he usually plays with his Turkish friends. Tahir is no longer excluded and has, indeed, become one of the Turkish peer group. When Tahir makes mistakes in trying to pronounce Turkish words, he is met with tolerance rather than disdain. When Mert, Kamil, and Akın come to the playground, Hayri lets them know that he understands the game his friends played and thus the lesson they sought to teach him about what Tahir had experienced in a foreign country.

In this part of the cartoon, Hayri says, “That is it. Tahir is one of us. Since he will live here, he can represent us as well, and in the best way. Tahir, come on. Show your talent. Play, come on, play, play! Come on, Tahir!” This is Hayri’s way of informing his friends that Tahir will participate in the tournament as a representative of Turkey. In addition, noting that Tahir is capable of playing flute and skipping ball suggests to viewers that there are also talented people

among the Syrian refugees in Turkey, and these people can contribute to Turkish society.

As noted previously, social interaction, communication, and respect for ethnic diversity practices affect one another and are in turn affected by one another. Unlike in the previous scenes, in the final scene, when the transformative event occurs, the refugee boy's lack of knowledge regarding the use of language and his different ethnic identity are finally respected (key practice – respect for ethnic diversity). This new respect paves the way communication to take place between the children, and the children are able to use gestures and mimicry, body language, and intonations to try to explain what they mean (key practice – communication). When the children begin to respect one another's differences and to communicate, the social interaction that occurs between them increases, and they are able to play together and share time socially (key practice – social interaction). This increase in social interaction further extends the respect the children have for one another's ethnic differences.

4. CONCLUSION

The Syrian civil war has entered its tenth year, which means that it has become increasingly unlikely that the Syrian refugees in Turkey will return to their homeland. Thus, it is imperative that the Turkish government and relevant public institutions begin to work to integrate the Syrians into Turkish society, which would serve to increase social acceptance and lessen the discontent that many Turkish citizens feel regarding the refugees. For this reason, the Turkish government has begun airing media-related work via the state broadcaster, TRT Çocuk, in an attempt to increase Turkish children's tolerance of Syrian children, episodes such as "Put Yourself in His Shoes" from *Rafadan Tayfa, The New Friend of Elif ve Arkadaşları*, and the *Haberin Olsun* documentary.

This study has analyzed the “Put Yourself in His Shoes” episode of *Rafadan Tayfa* using the mediated discourse analysis (MDA) method, and the messages the episode producer and the Turkish government intend to share with Turkish children regarding Syrian refugees have been examined in detail. The analysis has revealed that the episode aims to counter the negative perceptions and attitudes of Turkish children towards the refugees, and to explore how these attitudes make the refugees feel. The producer emphasizes that there is a lack of communication and social interaction between the parties due to the language barrier. Since the in-group, Turkish children, cannot communicate with foreigners (in this case Syrian refugees), some of these children feel uncomfortable and do not respect their ethnic difference.

In the beginning of the episode, Hayri’s friends want to teach a lesson to Hayri, who treats a foreign boy harshly, and by speaking Turkish backwards, they seek to make Hayri feel how a person who does not know the language that is spoken around them feels. The hardships that Hayri experiences are revealed by analysis of spoken language, gestures, intonations, and background music. The message that the producer intends to give to Turkish children here is that their foreign friends who are not able to communicate with them since they do not know the language in fact are able to speak another language, and that Turkish children might experience similar hardships when they go abroad.

In the subsequent part of the episode, Hayri regrets his treatment of the foreign boy and tries to communicate with him and teach him Turkish. Thanks to the communication that begins between them, Hayri begins to get to know the foreign boy better, and realizes how he is talented in both music and football, and social interaction between them begins.

The message that Hayri gives at the end of the episode has importance in terms of respect for ethnic diversity. At the beginning of the episode, Hayri, by using

the expression “We met because we will represent our country. Do you now understand why that boy cannot participate with us? We will represent Turkey, and he is foreign!”, did not include the foreign boy in his peer group, but at the end of the episode, due to the communication and social interaction that he has built with the foreign boy, he says “Since Tahir is with us now, since he will live here, he can also represent us [in the tournament]. And in the best way. Tahir, come on. Show them [Hayri’s friends] your talent”. In examples such as this, the necessity to respect ethnic diversity and people who are from different ethnic identities, such as refugees, may be seen to contribute to the host society in several fields.

According to social learning theory, when children imitate positive behaviours, like those depicted in the cartoon under analysis here, they are likely to internalize those behaviours and the messages associated with them, and this may in turn affect their perspectives of the world. In addition, this can help them to become more aware and respectful of different ethnic groups and cultures. Cartoons like *Rafadan Tayfa*, are incredibly important, as they may encourage Turkish children to better understand the difficult conditions under which the Syrian refugees had to leave their home country, as well as to understand the challenging and painful experience the refugees have faced since leaving their country and entering into a new and unfamiliar country. Their messages may play an important role in lessening some Turkish children’s prejudices toward the Syrian refugee children, in the development of empathy, and in increasing communication and social interaction between the groups.

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Ethical Review Board Resolution

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GENİŞ ÖZET

Giriş

2010 tarihinde Arap Baharı adı altında Orta Doğu ve Kuzey Afrika'da başlayan değişim rüzgarı Mart 2011'de Suriye'ye sıçramıştır. Diğer ülkelerin aksine Suriye devlet başkanı Beşşar Esad'ın halkın meşru taleplerine ve barışçıl göstericilere orantısız şiddetle karşılık vermesi ülke genelinde sürüncemeli bir iç savaşın başlamasına sebep olmuştur. Birleşmiş Milletler Mülteciler Yüksek Komiserliği'nin (UNHCR, 2021a) 7 Ekim 2021'de açıkladığı resmi rakamlarına göre, 5.6 milyon Suriye vatandaşı ülkelerindeki savaş sebebiyle başta Türkiye olmak üzere, Lübnan, Ürdün, Irak ve Mısır gibi ülkelere sığınmıştır. Türkiye bu ülkeler arasında 3.7 milyon Suriye vatandaşına uluslararası koruma sağlayarak dünyada en fazla mülteciye ev sahipliği yapan ülke konumuna gelmiştir (UNHCR, 2021b).

Suriye İç Savaşı'nın onuncu yılına girdiği günümüzde ülke içerisindeki siyasi krizin halen bir çözüme kavuşmamış olması, Türkiye'deki Suriyeli mültecilerin ana vatanlarına dönme olasılığını giderek azaltmaktadır. Gelişen bu şartlar altında Türk hükümeti, Türk çocuklarında Suriyeli mültecilere yönelik oluşabilecek ötekileştirmenin önlenmesi, hoşnutsuzlukların ve önyargılarının hafifletilmesi ve mültecilerin toplumsal kabulünün arttırılmasına yönelik çalışmalara girişmiştir. Bu kapsamda, Radyo ve Televizyon Üst Kurulu'nun tek çocuk kanalı olan TRT Çocuk, özellikle geleceğin yetişkinleri olacak Türk çocuklarında Suriyeli mültecilere yönelik olumlu bir bakış açısının geliştirebilmesi amacıyla az sayıda da olsa çeşitli programlar hazırlamaya ve bazı mevcut programların içeriğinde Suriyeli mülteci çocukların temsillerine yer vermeye başlamıştır.

Bu akademik çalışmada, TRT Çocuk kanalının en popüler çizgi filmleri arasında yer alan Rafadan Tayfa'nın mültecilere yönelik zengin mesajlar içeren "Kendini Onun Yerine Koy" bölümünü Scollon'ın Aracılı Söylem Analizi yöntemi ve Sosyal Öğrenme Kuramı çerçevesinde analiz etmiş ve çizgi filmin yapımcısının Suriyeli mültecilere ilişkin Türk çocuklarla hangi mesajları paylaşmak istediği derinlemesine incelenmiştir.

Yöntem

Ron Scollon'un (2001) aracılı söylem analizi yöntemi hem söylemin hem de söylem esnasında bireyler arasında gerçekleşen eylemin analizine odaklanmaktadır. Bu yöntem, kişinin "Orada neler oluyor?", "Orada kim ne

yapıyor ve neden yapıyor?” ve “Bu eylemin arkasında ne gibi motivasyonlar yatıyor?” gibi soruların cevaplarının alınmasını sağlar (Scollon ve De-Saint Georges, 2014, s. 66). Aracılı söylem analizi, yalnızca söylemdeki anlamın nasıl oluştuğuyla ve söylemin ne gibi mesajlar ilettiğiyle yetinmez; aynı zamanda söyleme eşlik eden tüm eylemleri de inceler (Norris ve Jones, 2005). Görsel etkiler, jestler, fon müziği, tonlamalar, vücut duruşları ve fiziksel tüm hareketler aracılığıyla paylaşılan çok modlu mesajlara vurgu yapar (Wohlwend, 2009a). Aracılı söylem analizine göre, tek başına söylemi incelemek, gerçekleşen eylemin anlamını açıklamada yetersiz kalmaktadır. Çünkü verilmek istenen mesajlar her zaman sadece söylemle ile ifade edilmez, eylem de söyleme eşlik eder.

Bu çalışmada veriler, Wohlwend (2009b)’in Scollon’dan uyarlamış olduğu Aracılı Söylem Analizi yönteminin dörtlü filtreleme modeli kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Filtrelerden ilki, videoda her biri aktif rol oynayan aktif katılımcıların tespit edilmesidir. İkinci filtre, temel eylemleri belirlemek için sahne gözlemidir. Bu filtre aracılığıyla videodaki sahneler dikkatle izlenir ve önemli eylemler kodlanır. Üçüncü filtre, önemli eylemlerin sıklıkla tekrarlandığı, birbirinden farklı eylemlerin aynı anda gerçekleştiği, birbirine bağlandığı, birbirini beslediği ve birbirinden beslendiği video kesitlerinin belirlenmesidir. Son filtre, video kesitlerinde karakterlerin davranış değişikliğinin gerçekleştiği kısımların bir başka deyişle sosyal öğrenmenin gerçekleştiği kısımların belirlenmesidir (Wohlwend, 2009b). Bu dört filtre uygulandıktan sonra araştırmacı, belirlenen eylemde dönüşümün gerçekleştiği olayları mikro analiz ederek analizi tamamlar.

Bulgular

Çizgi filmin bu bölümünde, Kamil, Hayri, Akın ve Mert mahallede top oynamak üzere bir araya gelmişlerdir. Kenarda bekleyen mülteci bir çocuğu (Tahir’i) fark ederler. Kamil, Akın ve Mert çocuğu da oyuna davet etmek isterler ancak Hayri anlamadıklarını bahane ederek çocuğu oyuna almaz. Bu duruma içerleyen ve yabancı bir ülkeye gelmiş bir bireyi dışlamanın ne kadar yanlış bir davranış olduğunu Hayri’ye öğretmek isteyen arkadaşları, ona bir oyun oynamaya karar verirler. Ertesi gün mahalledeki bütün tabelaları tersten yazarlar ve kendi aralarında tersten konuşmaya başlarlar. Hayri bu duruma çok şaşırır; arkadaşlarıyla iletişim kuramayınca kendini yalnız, dışlanmış ve yabancı bir yerde gibi hisseder. Biraz ileride Tahir’in flüt çaldığını fark eden Hayri, Tahir’in yanına oturur ve ona ne kadar yanlış davrandığını anladığını ifade eder. Daha sonra arkadaşlarının kendisine ders vermek istediğini anlayan Hayri, Tahir ile birlikte mahalle meydanında top oynarken arkadaşları da gelip onlara katılır. Bu bölümde, mülteci çocuğun hem müzikte hem de futbolda ne kadar yetenekli bir çocuk olduğuna da vurgu yapılmaktadır.

Aracılı söylem analizinin ilk filtresinde, Kamil, Hayri, Akın, Mert ve Tahir aktif katılımcılar olarak belirlenmiştir. İkinci filtrede, söylemin oluşumuna aracılık eden ve çizgi filmde sıklıkla tekrar eden eylemler (temalar) sosyal etkileşim, iletişim ve etnik çeşitliliğe saygı olarak tanımlanmıştır. Üçüncü filtrede, temel eylemlerin aynı anda gerçekleştiği, birbirini beslediği ve birbirinden beslendiği video kesitleri belirlenmiştir. Dördüncü filtrede, bu video kesitleri analiz edilerek karakterlerin davranışlarında değişimin yani sosyal öğrenmenin gerçekleştiği kısımlar (Hayri'nin pişmanlık duyması, arkadaşlarının ona vermek istediği dersi almış olması ve Tahir'i gruba dahil etmesi) belirlenmiş ve son olarak bu kısımlar mikro analiz edilmiştir.

Sonuç ve Tartışma

Çalışmada yapılan analiz sonucunda, Rafadan Tayfa'nın bu bölümünde Türk çocukların Suriyeli mültecilere yönelik olumsuz algı ve tutumlarının önlenmesi ve bu tür olumsuz yaklaşımların mülteci çocuklara nasıl hissettirdiği konusunda empati hissinin geliştirilmeye çalışıldığı tespit edilmiştir. Bölümün yapımcısı, dil engeli nedeniyle Türk ve Suriyeli çocuklar arasında iletişim ve sosyal etkileşim sorununun yaşandığının ve bazı Türk çocuklarda etnik farklılıklara karşı saygının mevcut olmadığını altını çizmektedir.

Sosyal öğrenme kuramına göre, çocuklar çizgi film karakterlerini kendilerine rol model alabilmekte ve onlarda gözlemedikleri olumlu davranışları taklit edip, içselleştirebilmektedir. Bu da onların hem dış dünyaya hem de yabancılara olan bakış açılarının şekillenmesinde rol oynayabilmektedir. Buna ilaveten, çocuklara izledikleri çizgi filmler vasıtasıyla olumlu mesajlar verilmekte, farklı etnik gruplara ve kültürlerle karşı daha bilinçli ve anlayışlı olma duygusunun aşılacağı düşünülmektedir. Rafadan Tayfa gibi çocukların severek takip ettiği çizgi filmler aracılığıyla verilen mesajlar, Türk çocuklarının Suriyeli mültecilerin anavatanlarını terk etmelerine sebep olan faktörleri ve mültecilerin ana vatanlarından ayrıldıktan sonra ne gibi zorluklarla karşı karşıya kaldıklarını anlayabilmeleri açısından önem arz etmektedir. Günümüzde devlet okullarında aynı ortamı paylaşan Türk ve Suriyeli çocuklar arasında iletişim ve sosyal etkileşim sorunlarının giderilmesi, bazı Türk çocuklarda Suriyeli mülteci çocuklara ilişkin mevcut olan ön yargıların azaltılması ve empati duygusunun geliştirilmesi açısından çizgi filmler vasıtasıyla verilebilecek olumlu mesajlar oldukça önem arz etmektedir. Bu sebeple yalnızca devlet kanalında değil özel kanallarda da bu tür içeriklerin arttırılmasının mültecilere karşı daha hoşgörülü bir toplumun temellerinin atılması açısından önem taşıdığı düşünülmektedir.

Appendix:**List of Key Practices**

Key Practices of Communication	Key Practices of Social Interaction	Key Practices of Respect for Ethnic Diversity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shouting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exclusion via nationalist discourse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being regretful
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not being able to communicate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeing through the eyes of the foreigner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding his situation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Placing emphasis on not knowing the language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Including the refugee boy in the group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasizing similarities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling lonely 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ignoring the refugee boy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respecting that the refugee boy does not know the language
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not noticing differences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not giving importance to ethnic differences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changing the writing to make it difficult to understand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expelling the refugee boy from the area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not seeing the other as being different from himself
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Backslanging 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling lonely 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognizing others' talents and thus contributions to the host country
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pretending not to understand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offering a treat 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chatting 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Playing games 	